

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 14-21 and 23-26 are pending in the application. In light of the amendments and following remarks, Applicant believes all the pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

Formal Matters

Claim 23 was objected to as being dependent on a canceled claim. As correctly noted by the Examiner, claim 23 should now depend on claim 15 and the claim has been amended accordingly. Therefore, the objection is overcome.

The § 102(e) Rejection of Claims 1-6, 8, 14-19, and 23

Claims 1-6, 8, 14-19, and 23 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,913,195, issued June 15, 1999 to Weeren et al. (hereinafter "Weeren"). For the following reasons, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Weeren does not disclose general-purpose blocks as claimed. For example, claim 1 recites the following:

a plurality of general-purpose blocks, each general-purpose block being coupled to at least one other general-purpose block, wherein each general-purpose block plays a prompt and is configurable to send a first signal after playing the prompt or send a second signal according to received input after playing the prompt;

(emphasis supplied). As claimed, a general-purpose block is configurable to, after playing a prompt, send a first signal or send a second signal according to received input.

The Office Action first cites blocks 208 and 212 in Fig. 2 of Weeren as being the claimed general-purpose blocks. However, scenario block 208 directs flow based on a existing information (e.g., whether the call is a nonmerchant or merchant) and sub-function icon 212 is also cited. Neither is shown to include the features recited above.

Additionally, the Office Action cited col. 7, lines 45-55. This sections states as follows:

Therefore, general icons such as "ask," to indicate user input, "tell," to indicate VRU output, "scenario," indicating a branch point in the conversation, and "menu," to indicate a list of user selectable options, are utilized to conceptualize aspects of the call flow in the prototype.

The “general” icons of Weeren are disclosed as being directed to a specific function. These “general” icons are not the claimed general-purpose blocks. None of the “general” icons of Weeren include all the features of a general-purpose block as claimed.

For example, the Office Action cites menu icon 501 in Fig. 5 of Weeren. The functionality of this block is shown in Fig. 3 (which is also cited in the Office Action). However, the menu icon in Weeren is shown to implement a menu. In other words, menu icon 501 is not shown to be configurable to send a first signal or send a second signal according to received input recited in claim 1. Instead, Weeren discloses a menu icon for implementing menus and it is not disclosed as being configurable to perform other general functions as the claimed general-purpose blocks.

As described in the specification, the general-purpose blocks of the invention allow the purpose or function of the block to be changed depending on how the block is configured (page 21 et seq.). This has numerous advantages, including reducing the number of blocks that have to be learned and understood. Weeren shows many different types of blocks that have specific functions. As the preceding has shown, Weeren does not disclose the general-purpose blocks as claimed.

As Weeren does not support a prima facie case of anticipation, claims 1-6, 8, 14-19, and 23 are patentably distinct and should be passed to issue.

The § 103(a) Rejection of Claims 7, 9-12 and 21

Claims 7, 9-12 and 21 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Weeren in view of U6,463,130, issued October 8, 2002 to Malik. These claims are dependent claims so include all the features of the base claims. As it has not been shown where Malik remedies the deficiencies of the primary reference Weeren, these claims are patentably distinct for at least the same reasons as above.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this amendment, the Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 19-2179 (Order No. 00-P-9019-US).

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